

Sacrifice Deserves Gratitude

By James Edwards, DC

Before Sept. 11, 2001, I must admit that I pretty much took the fire department, police department and members of our armed forces for granted. Not any more! In fact, since Sept. 14, 2001, I have never passed a firefighter, police officer or uniformed service person without touching their shoulder and saying, "Thanks for what you do."

When I first started doing this, every one of them was caught off guard and quite surprised that someone would take the effort to thank them for their service. That is no longer true. Now when I acknowledge their service, they are no longer surprised because so many citizens do the same thing. I feel so strongly about this simple expression of gratitude that I do it even if I am rushing through an airport or - as has occurred in the past - getting stopped for speeding!

When my wife and practice partner, Dr. Cindy Vaughn, and I were recently in Las Vegas, we experienced something that neither of us will ever forget. While sitting at a gaming table, we noticed a sergeant in the Marines walking past us in full dress blues, accompanied by his wife. Without hesitation, we both immediately left the table and ran to catch up with him to thank him and his wife for their service to this country. And then something unexpected happened - many more sergeants and their wives continued to pass us on their way to the ball held in their honor. In fact, there were so many of them that we "cashed in" and spent the better part of an hour shaking the hands of more than 100 of our nation's heroes. While we could see that they were genuinely touched by our expression of gratitude, we were the ones deeply touched to have had the opportunity to thank these valiant warriors.

But guess what? A completely different group of Marines and their wives were attending the ball the very next night. And so we thanked another group of more than 100 Marine heroes and their wives! Without question, those two nights were the highlight of our trip and something we will never forget.

While certainly not on par with firefighters, police officers and the military who are willing to put their lives on the line for us, there are many members of this profession that labor long and hard for you and who deserve your gratitude. ACA President Dr. Glenn Manceaux once told me, "Yeah, no one knows all the family things we miss." He then related how he spent his wedding anniversary at an ACA meeting ... instead of with his wife!

So why are state licensing board members, college trustees, PAC officers, and state association and ACA leaders willing to make these sacrifices for the profession? It's sure not for the notoriety, because so few know of their service nor remember it. If you don't believe me, just try to name three members of your state licensing board ... or the secretary-treasurer of your state association ... or your ACA district governor. And they sure don't do it for the money because some of these jobs do not even reimburse the volunteer for their expenses. Now add in the lost income from being out of the office, and you realize that serving in these positions costs the doctor many thousands of dollars each year.

I'll tell you why they do it. Again, while not on the same par, they do it for the same reason firefighters, police officers and uniformed service members do what they do. They are dedicated to a cause and are willing to personally sacrifice for the greater good. So the next time you walk by a firefighter, police officer or member of the armed forces, I urge you to stop and take the time to express your gratitude. And the next time you spot a volunteer leader in the chiropractic profession, please take the time to say, "Thanks for what you do!"

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